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Identical letters dated 22 August 2011 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I write to express my grave concern following a series of appalling acts of terrorism targeting Israeli civilians, which have killed 9 people and injured more than 90 in the past four days.

On 18 August 2011, a group of terrorists originating from the Gaza Strip infiltrated into Israel from the Sinai Peninsula in Egypt. They took up positions along Road 12 in southern Israel and attacked two public buses and two cars with firearms and explosives, murdering 6 civilians and injuring 15 other people. Later, when the Israel Defense Forces and Israeli police arrived on the scene, the terrorists opened fire, killing an Israeli police officer and an Israel Defense Forces soldier, and injuring four members of the Israeli security forces.

Over the past four days, the Israeli people have been subjected to the most severe escalation of rocket and mortar fire from Gaza since the end of Operation Cast Lead in 2009. More than 100 rockets and dozens of mortars have been fired at major Israeli cities and towns since 18 August 2011. No other nation would stand idle as its citizens were subjected to this constant threat.

The stories and images coming out of southern Israel should horrify all decent people. In Be'er-Sheva, a man travelling to ensure the safety of his pregnant wife was killed by an exploding rocket. In Ofakim, a rocket exploded inside a home, injuring a 4-month-old infant, a 9-year-old child and a 20-year-old man. In Ashdod, rockets landed in a synagogue, injuring many worshippers.

The Security Council failed to condemn the horrendous terrorist attacks of 18 August — as it has done following similar instances of terrorism — and remains mute in the face of the terrorist rockets that continue to fall on Israeli citizens. This silence is deafening. The many victims of these attacks deserve to hear the clear and unequivocal condemnation of these terrorist acts from the international community.

It is no coincidence that Lebanon — whose own Government is held hostage by a terrorist organization — is the only Security Council member obstructing a statement of condemnation. The attempt by this Member State to justify terrorism is morally reprehensible and undermines the credibility of the United Nations.

Throughout the escalating violence, Israel has kept open the Erez and Kerem Shalom crossings for aid and access, even though these very crossings have been the target of continued terrorist fire. This contrast is clear: while we work to ensure that

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aid keeps flowing to the people of Gaza, their own leaders relentlessly target the people of Israel. In each of southern Israel's major cities — from Be'er-Sheva to Ashkelon to Ashdod — unremitting rocket fire has fallen on the structures that serve as the basis for civilian life, including homes, hospitals and schools.

Recent events clearly illustrate that Gaza — under the reign of Hamas — remains an epicentre of extremism, where terrorists continue to plan and launch attacks against civilians with impunity. with each rocket that rains down on Israel, the farce of Palestinian unity becomes plainer for the world to see. So far, the symbols of unity are not understanding, peace and tolerance, but rather terrorism, hatred and violence. This is a reality that the international community must not ignore.

The more than 100 rockets launched at Israel during the past four days provide more than 100 reminders to the international community that there is a pressing need to stem the flow of arms into the Gaza Strip by land and sea. Preventing this illegal activity is an integral part of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009), but receives hardly any attention from the international community.

Israel does not seek an escalation of conflict in our region. However, like any other nation, Israel has a responsibility and a right to protect its people and its borders. Israel has responded — and will continue to respond — to the deliberate murder of its civilians, taking all necessary measures in the fight against terrorism and its perpetrators.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter distributed as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ron **Prosor**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative